The California State Role in Immigrant Social Policy

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Overview

There are sound reasons for California state government to take leadership in supporting immigrants Our success as a state in integrating immigrants into the social, economic and civic life of California communities will make a lasting difference in the quality of life for all Californians—not simply immigrants themselves.

Current social science research increasingly stresses how important social and community context is in determining individual outcomes. One of our first priorities needs to be ongoing research, as well as informal observation and information-sharing, to continually enhance our understanding of how the lives of immigrant and native-born Californians are intertwined and to use the insights from such research to design strategies which will facilitate processes of immigrant integration which are already underway. An immigrant slogan which arose in the context of the Proposition 187 debate—"Aqui estamos, y no nos vamos..." (We're here and we're not leaving) captures a simple but profound reality. Whether or not native-born populations wish California to be an increasingly pluralistic state-nation of immigrants, the sociological reality is that our state is diverse and will become increasingly diverse. A "generous" and welcoming set of state policies oriented toward integrating immigrants into California society and community life will not be a "magnet" drawing more immigrants but can serve as a magnet drawing all Californians closer together.

Too often we hear discussions of immigrants as a source of unskilled labor. State policy should not treat immigrants simply as cheap sources of labor and potential public sector liabilities but, rather, as assets. Immigrants bring with them to California traditions of mutualism and experience in working collaboratively in societies and communities where economic resources are scarce. The challenge and opportunity we face in California is to take advantage of this "social capital" which immigrants bring with them and seek to develop the sorts of civic environment and community institutions which proactively seek to fully engage both immigrants and the California-born in community life.

California's efforts in planning social programs to respond to immigrants' needs has been handicapped by a fixation on macro-level fiscal considerations without a counter-balancing interest in effective program design and careful analysis of both the cost and potential impact of policy/planning options. Throughout the course of post-IRCA efforts by state agencies to capture the most federal funding for services to immigrants and the subsequent Proposition 187 debate about how to avoid such costs, there were a variety of

exercises in speculation regarding the services which immigrants used, which they needed, and what the costs of such services was—with minimal empirical exploration of the actual state of affairs.

What is needed now is serious attention to the sorts of social policy and program responses which might provide the most effective means to rapidly and cost-effectively integrate immigrants into the mainstream of California life and innovative thinking about how to craft a network of policies and programs which will have both immediate and long-term impacts on the lives of immigrants, their families, and the communities in which they live. This is a proper role for the state because these issues are large-scale ones which affect most of California's counties—not just one or two urban areas or one or two rural counties. The state role must include modest but serious and focused investments in applied research regarding changing demographics, community dynamics, as a basis for innovative program design. Such efforts should be coupled with sound evaluation structured to provide practical guidance for program refinement.

The key challenges in doing this will include:

- The need to creatively "work around" the limitations of federal program funding which generally conditions program eligibility on legal immigration status and to advocate on a continuing basis for "immigrant-friendly" federal legislation and program regulations.

- the need to develop program designs that, while equitable to all, permit the design and delivery of "customized" programs and services targeted to the specific needs of immigrants

- the need to provide leadership and guidance in education, public health, and social program design, while encouraging local innovation and flexibility, and, at the same time, holding local government and non-profit organizations accountable for achieving real outcomes, not simply presenting immigrants with catalogues of "window-shopping" opportunities

- the need to reconfigure program interventions to assure that they are cost-effective and to provide the most ample range of opportunities for immigrant volunteers and activists to assist in addressing the problems immigrants and the communities in which they live face, coupled with efforts to identify useful outcome measures to gauge the impacts of these efforts.

Key Issues

There are several over-arching considerations that should be taken into account in defining the role of state government and key objectives in a rational immigrant social policy in California. I focus on Latino immigrants and the issues affecting them because this is the population I know best--but many of these issues are relevant to all groups of California immigrants.

My recommendations are the following:

- Develop family-oriented immigrant social policy
- Work proactively to facilitate immigrant civic participation
- Develop cost-effective adult education programs for immigrants
- Create learning opportunities/ programs tailored to the needs of immigrant children
- Provide undocumented California immigrants access to legal services
- Explore innovative strategies to improve immigrant access to affordable housing
- Transcend the limitations of "Cookie Cutter" public health and social service programs

I discuss the rationale for each of these recommendations and explain what each would entail in the following section.

Develop Family-Oriented Immigrant Social Policy

California's "immigrant population" cannot be neatly distinguished from Californians as a whole. Because of the vagaries of immigration regulations, between one-third and one-half (40%) of low-income California families with children and one-quarter of all California families with children live in "mixed status" families, i.e. those with at least one non-citizen parent (Fix and Zimmerman, 1999). Program eligibility restrictions based on individual immigration status are costly in terms of case management and dysfunctional in presuming to divide families into "deserving" and "undeserving" children (e.g. undocumented vs. LPR or citizen children). No parent should be expected to feed only their citizen children or secure health care only for those who are service-eligible. All family members share the frustrations, problems, pain, and anger of those who are ineligible for critical services. California's policy should be to allow all children in "mixed status" families to be treated equitably.

In terms of irrationality, the exclusion of undocumented children from eligibility for access to health care under programs such as Medi-Cal/Healthy Families and the de facto exclusion of undocumented teenagers who have grown up in California, gone to California elementary schools and graduated from California high schools from access to a college education are particular problems of concern. The human, social, and economic costs of sick children or young adults who have not fulfilled their full educational potential cannot be avoided by denying service. They are simply "hidden" while, at the same time, wreaking havoc within families and within service delivery systems whose primary purpose is to deliver effective service.

Work Proactively To Encourage and Facilitate Immigrant Civic Participation

Immigrants are important resources for California community life. Civic participation should not be reduced to the ritual of voting by citizens. The energy of all residents of California communities are needed to engage in civic dialogue and debate, collective problem-solving, volunteer efforts to help less fortunate people in the community, and collaboration to assure that pressing community needs are addressed. For example, we found in our 1999 evaluation of an ongoing Irvine Foundation-sponsored Central Valley Partnership initiative (Kissam et al, 1999) that immigrant volunteer activists with relatively low levels of educational attainment made a major contribution to their communities by teaching ESL/Citizenship courses to middle-aged naturalization applicants. The beneficiaries were not only students in the class but immigrant volunteers themselves for whom this program provided them a first, exciting, and rewarding experience of "making a difference".

A very high priority should be to facilitate similar community activism and service among all immigrants—both recently-arrived undocumented immigrants and long-time California residents. This is a high priority for a number of reasons—to bring immigrants and native-born populations closer together (see Bach/Ford Foundation, 1993) but also simply to "get things done" which need to be done. Without affirmative efforts to bring diverse populations together by working side-by-side to address common concerns—in improving local schools, combating crime, enhancing parks and recreational facilities, we run the risk of escalating ethnic tensions as California's population continues to become more diverse. This is a promising area for collaboration among local and regional businesses, California foundations, state and local government.

The California Commission on Improving the Quality of Life Through Service has both the funding and the vision to provide leadership in catalyzing proactive efforts to bring immigrants and native-born Californians together in working to address their communities' needs. The Commission should: a) conduct a statewide community needs assessment and b) encourage local development of national and community service projects bringing immigrants and native-born Californians together. State agencies and commissions, local government, and community institutions should systematically seek to overcome language barriers which preclude immigrant involvement

Develop Cost-Effective Adult Education Programs for Immigrants

Some immigration policy analysts (e.g. Borjas) gauge "quality of immigrants" in terms of educational attainment. Indeed, many immigrants, particularly Mexican and Central American immigrants to California, have had few opportunities to complete high school or even elementary school; this combination of limited-English and limited schooling present barriers to functioning effectively in a "high performance" information-based economy and society (ETS, 1995). However, it is a tragic fallacy to consider lack of educational opportunity to be an indicator of decreased human potential.

Because of the size of the universe of need, adult education for immigrants needs to be a state priority. Need is extensive but cost-effective program designs exist. However, because adult education programs have generally been oriented toward measuring inputs (i.e. using ADA or "seat time" as the basis for funding) not outcomes, there has been little attention to cost-effectiveness or the potential of innovative and intensive "customized" instructional designs to better help immigrants to rapidly develop the functional competencies they need for working in a workplace and living in a society where information management is central. Here as in other program areas, a "cookie cutter" approach does not imply equity or service quality, only ineffective program design.

At the adult education system level, one simple program management initiative would greatly improve adult education effectiveness—a shift from "open entry-open exit" models of adult learning as "browsing" to well-structured instructional designs which orient learners to effective learning, provide intensive engaging classroom learning for a short period of time, and followup with coaching/mentoring support for self-directed learning. A second such initiative would be to improve counseling/guidance services to assist adult learners in thinking about how to figure out an individualized plan of learning from a hodge-podge catalogue of courses with arbitrary numbers and titles.

A wide range of innovative, practical options and resources are available—including a newly-based skills framework developed by the National Institute for Literacy—"Equipped for the Future" (NIFL, 2000). My colleagues and I have, over the past decade, described a number of promising options for reform (Guth and Wrigley, 1994; Kissam and Reder, 1996; Kissam, 2001; Wrigley, 2001). Here I mention only a few illustrative examples:

Workplace Literacy Programs. In the mid-1990's California experimented extensively with federally-funded workplace literacy programs which provided intensive, "customized", on-site instruction to immigrant workers to improve their English-language and basic skills. These public-private sector collaborations were very successful but were never made an integral part of California's adult education offerings. This is an area where businesses concerned about the productivity and competitiveness of California's future workforce could join together with adult education providers to develop affordable, innovative, and effective designs.

Family English Literacy Programs. In the mid-1990's California funded a number of family English literacy programs in which immigrants parents and their children learned English together. The provisions of Proposition 227 which allow funding of ESL programs designed to help immigrant parents better help their children learn English have potential if there is serious planning to determine how best to configure these programs to achieve results and how to support immigrant parents and their children in learning together.

Volunteer-Based and Team-Based ESL Programs. Second-generation immigrants who are bilingual in English and their native language represent valuable resources for English-language instruction. Although some programs such as the statewide non-profits such as California Literacy have in the past made a major effort in this realm, this is an area where the California Department of English has shown virtually no leadership—in part because of the doctrine that only "professionals" can become effective instructors. Certainly, effective volunteer-based programs require sound supervision, solid orientation, and systematic in-service training, but this is an area where innovation could make cost-effective service expansion a practical reality. Streamlined certification of the credentials of teachers trained in foreign countries to, at least, work as mid-level technical specialists and co-instructors in California schools would augment the resource pool. ABE/ESL programs operating in affordable housing developments or public housing projects can overcome transportation and child care problems which present barriers to immigrants' learning and, at the same time, recruit local volunteers and tutors to help with instruction.

<u>Foster Learning Opportunities and Programs Tailored to the Needs of Immigrant Children and Youth</u>

Educational planners have not given adequate attention to the specific educational needs or demographics of immigrant children. In the area of K-12 education, as in other areas, Urban Institute policy analysts have been the first to make the critical link between demographic realities and effective planning, noting that while special programs are primarily targeted to elementary schools, the most rapid growth of foreign-born, recently-arrived, and limited-English students are in the middle and high school levels (Ruiz de Velasco and Fix, 2001). The younger children in immigrant households are more likely to be California-born and to have learned English on their own.

The highly-politicized debate about the pros and cons of bilingual education allowed only minimal attention to the fundamental questions of what instructional designs worked and which didn't. In such a polarized environment, where there is a sharp dividing line between those who are pro-immigrant and anti-immigrant, education programs such as Migrant Education have not been optimized to focus on innovative strategies for addressing immigrant children's learning needs—although they have made some progress in involving immigrant children's parents in school activities. There is extensive research which provides a basis for developing tailored, responsive programs (Rumbaut and Cornelius, 1995; Suarez-Orozco, 1997) but available analyses suggest that immigrant students often do not have equitable access to educational opportunity (Lopez, 1995; Van Hook and Fix, 1997), much less programs tailored to their needs.

Velasco de Ruiz and Fix wisely call on schools to recognize diversity among immigrant students and customize instruction to respond to the special needs of distinct sub-populations (e.g. newly-arrived immigrant teenagers vs. long-term LEP). A centerpiece of this important report focuses on demonstration projects in Hayward, Salinas, Long Beach, and Paramount. Their findings identify a number of promising strategies for local school reform I strongly recommend careful consideration and a state role in encouraging

and assisting local school districts in testing, adapting, and adopting some of these "structural" approaches.

In general, schools' efforts to treat all parents and all children alike are not the best way to involve immigrant parents' whose own lack of education makes them nervous and unsure in standard events such as Parents' Night, PTA meetings, and school board meetings. Clearly, special affirmative efforts need to be made to "welcome" and engage immigrant parents, to recognize the value of immigrants' cultural heritage in a meaningful way, and to develop better ways for school personnel and parents to collaborate in advancing the education of K-12 children.

Hosting events in immigrants' native languages, working harder to recognize cultural diversity and integrate it into curriculum, and de-mystifying the arcane technical language of school governance would be a beginning, but much more is needed. One of the most promising program models with which I am familiar is Migrant Head Start which did an excellent job of involving pre-school children's parents (Kissam, Steirman, and Nakamoto, 1997); but even here, despite a commitment to multi-culturalism, curriculum materials were only slightly reflective of the day-to-day lives and cultures of immigrant parents and their children.

A specific concern which was recently called to my attention by a group of undocumented Tulare County high school students with whom I have begun meeting is that adequate career counseling is desperately needed for students who have not grown up in the United States and whose parents work in immigrant-dominated industries.

Another fundamental need is for the state to play a proactive role in facilitating immigrant youth's access to higher education, irrespective of immigration status. Those immigrant students who achieve academic excellence despite having come only recently to California deserve to be able to pursue their education—based on their ability and aspirations. Clearly the best possible solution would stem from federal legislation which removes immigration status as a bar to federal financial assistance for higher education for students who are bona fide residents of California communities; as it happens, Congressman Berman introduced such legislation early this week (on May 21, 2001); the state's role should include vigorous advocacy for this type of legislation and policy which benefits its immigrant residents.

But even if there is no action in Congress, state initiatives are possible. Immigrant students deserve at the very least the opportunities offered in the currently-pending AB 540 by Marcos Firebaugh; surely, students who have attended California secondary schools should be considered California residents for the purpose of determining tuition charges, irrespective of immigration status; Even more importantly, alternative funding opportunities should be provided for them—perhaps via work-study grants, state loan programs, or through public-private sector initiatives to fund higher education for deserving students who have graduated from California high schools irrespective of immigration status

More attention also needs to be given to providing innovative learning opportunities for out-of-school immigrant teenagers—who have dropped out of high school or who may never have gone beyond elementary school. Although education programs can serve children irrespective of their immigration status, a recent study we did of migrant teenagers working in agriculture (Kissam et al, 2000) showed that although there are probably about 60,000 immigrant teenagers with less than a high school education working full-time day-long schedules in California agriculture, Migrant Education has neglected to provide night school programs, self-directed learning programs, or any alternative options for these working teenagers, many of whom hold on to career aspirations to "some day' go on to real careers. Although some of these youth may return to Mexico or Guatemala in time, at least half are likely to settle in California. It would benefit them and the communities in which they will settle and to provide them learning opportunities to develop at the very least basic literacy, English-language, and vocational skills.

Provide Undocumented California Immigrants Access to Legal Services

Immigrants live and work in environments where they are very likely to have their legal rights abused (Bach, 1996).

In dealings with landlords and local businesses immigrants are often not aware of their rights as renters or consumers. In dealings with public institutions, immigrants, understandably, are not aware of their right to equitable treatment and due process (e.g. the right to appeal adverse administrative decisions which affect immigrant equity—in accessing public health care or social services, or in securing equitable educational opportunities for their children).

Employers in the "tertiary" labor markets such as agriculture where immigrants work often fail to comply with a variety of legal requirements (Kissam et al, 2000). Failures to pay the minimum wage, failure to pay over time, violations of OSHA regulations, efforts to oppose Workers' Compensation claims are all common. A recent series of Sacramento Bee articles documented these problems—and the state's failure to provide effective enforcement of even the laws that are on the books. Interestingly, the State Labor Commissioner's chief of enforcement was quoted as stating that many of his field inspectors "really weren't trained in investigations".

The state role must be to assure that the "rule of law" prevails in all California communities, social, and economic environments. This will benefit not only immigrants but all Californians. Department of Labor researchers began, in the 1980's, to document the ways in which illegal employment practices initially developed in immigrant-dominated industries such as agriculture became increasingly prevalent in other low-wage industries—affecting native-born and immigrant workers alike.

The federal prohibition on Legal Service Corporation (LSC) funded grantees' provision of services to or representation of immigrants is not only inequitable; it also threatens the "rule of law" in low-income neighborhoods, communities, and industries where

immigrants are concentrated. California's state policy should be that all low-income persons in the state should be afforded assistance in defending their legal rights.

Proactive state investments in educating immigrants' about their rights and in problem-solving strategies to negotiate solutions to legal problems and in "preventive" legal know-how (e.g. re consumer contracts) are an area where investments can be cost-effective while having a substantial impact—not just in making conditions better for immigrants but for all Californians.

A packet of adult education materials we developed (with federal funding) for the California Department of Education—our "Tierra de Oportunidad" materials (Kissam, Dorsey, and Intili, 1996) are now being used in a number of adult education programs in courses which seek to build practical know-how about the "rules of the game" in the social and legal universe of California life together with English-language and basic skills. Self-help seminars on special topics (e.g. renters' rights), wallet-cards outlining immigrants' rights distributed by immigrant advocacy organizations such as CHIRLA and NCCIR, and mass media campaigns (e.g. about fraudulent immigration consultants) are all important cost-effective investments in helping immigrants. The state must go beyond translating brochures to begin re-examination and re-design of the educational strategies used by all agencies.

Explore Innovative Strategies to Improve Immigrant Access to Affordable Housing

One in seven California immigrant families (15%) spend more than half of their earnings on shelter (Capps, 2001). Because California immigrants are a population of "working poor", the high cost and sub-standard quality of available housing deserves priority as an element in a comprehensive state strategy for proactively addressing immigrant issues.

Efforts to improve housing conditions can have a "multiplier effect" by increasing low-income immigrant families' disposable income while, at the same time, stable, safe, secure housing can contribute to children's educational success, decrease family stress, and improve family health. The RCAC Agricultural Worker Health and Housing Program funded by The California Endowment (which our firm is evaluating) will provide an idea of what kinds of indirect impacts housing investments have on at least this sub-population of immigrants.

However, like social service programs, current housing policy is implicitly ethnocentric, oriented toward a vision of neighborhoods composed of homes occupied by nuclear families while the reality of immigrant housing in California is one of crowded, sub-standard housing—often in disrepair. While California operates about 13 farm labor camps for migrants, some of which are well-designed and well-run, these probably house only 2-4% of California farmworkers.

Possibilities which deserve to be considered include the following:

- *Increased emphasis on housing rehabilitation and a program of low-interest loans for which low-income immigrant landlords can qualify.* In many areas where immigrants are concentrated, prior generations of immigrants are low-income landlords who rely on rental income as they age. Facilitating their access to credit can improve conditions for their tenants if, for example such property improvement loans were linked to rent increases tied to the CPI or some other appropriate index to avoid windfalls if rehabilitated properties improved with taxpayer funds were to be sold.

- *Exploration of the barriers to and creation of incentives to encourage development of decent housing for other than nuclear families, including extended families, and groups of unrelated persons who share housing*. While state policy should be oriented toward decreasing the extent of crowded housing and improving the quality of dilapidated housing, the solution need not consist entirely of single-family housing development. A specific problem is that more funding is needed for housing for migrant farmworkers—almost all of whom are immigrants.

- *A state role in review of local ordinances, regulations, and planning commission and/or zoning actions taken with respect to projects design to provide affordable housing for immigrants and other low-income persons* and opposition to exclusionary local actions when these actions are, in fact, motivated by racism or anti-immigrant sentiments, rather than on bona fide community planning considerations. This role could well be coupled with efforts to disseminate "best practices" in creative community development oriented toward creating convivial manageable multi-ethnic communities.

- *Advocacy for federal housing program guidelines or state-funded loan guarantees which facilitate loan qualification by low-income immigrants* who, despite low annual earnings, have solid employment histories, and non-traditional strategies (such as sharing housing among different family units in an extended family) to make loan payments. In subsidized rental housing, there needs to be acknowledgment of the possibility that immigrant workers may, through no fault of their own, be laid off seasonally (e.g. in agriculture) or when small businesses fail.

<u>Transcend the Limitations of "Cookie Cutter" Public Health and Social Programs</u>

David Hayes-Bautista's research in health policy over the past 20 years has shown that Latino immigrants, the largest single population of immigrants in California are a healthy population in many respects. His critique of the "underclass model" of social programs (e.g. Hayes-Bautista et al, 1992) has a sound empirical basis. "Cookie cutter" program designs are not optimally effective because they fail to recognize or adequately respond to immigrant diversity. Burgeoning levels of expenditures on "outreach" to inform immigrants about programs which are not well-designed to meet their needs or open to them (e.g. Healthy Families outreach) are neither cost-effective nor helpful.

How best to configure a rational and responsive program of immigrant-oriented social or health services is a very complex endeavor. But there is relevant research here and one common theme is the need to provide family support services to help families in dealing with the complexities they face in cultural adaptation, in managing the tensions of raising children in an environment where home values and public values clash, and in finding economic strategies to deal with chronic job instability working in seasonal industries, or in small businesses with high rates of business failure. Latino families are a resource for wellness but research (Aguilar et al, 1999; Menjivar, 1996) suggests that, under the multiple pressures of acculturation, many problems of internal family conflict can arise.

High priority needs to be given to community mental health initiatives, preventive health campaigns, and multi-stranded interventions (such as Head Start) designed to enhance family resiliency. Community-based interventions can be very cost-effective here because immigrants' informal social networks are rich in "social capital" and paraprofessional staff (*promotoras/promotores*) can take the lead—in counseling programs, preventive health campaigns, and in case management/ombudsman efforts to improve family problem-solving, service access and service effectiveness. My evaluations of a variety of proactive health campaigns by Radio Bilingue, for example, suggest that Spanish-language radio can be highly cost-effective—in part, because campaign messages (e.g. anti-tobacco initiatives funded by the Tobacco Control Section of the Dept. of Health Services), when designed to appeal to and engage immigrants, are repeated often by word of mouth. The California Endowment has wisely identified community mental health as a major priority in their health promotion efforts while, at the same time, stressing the need to increase cultural competency and responsiveness in the delivery system.

There needs to be an improved level of cultural competence across all program areas. The state role can and should include support for research which provides an increasingly finely-textured understanding of immigrant diversity in California. But it should also include practical emphases on "best practices" which will contribute to improve access to program services and more effective utilization of services which are funded.

Most contemporary social programs' legalistic paperwork requirements respect neither the reality of immigrants' limited English nor the fact that many immigrants have limited literacy. An obvious example is over-reliance on a multitude of pamphlets to communicate a variety of messages when modest investments in community workers providing oral information would be more effective. Less obvious perhaps is the need to respect the value of time of immigrants who are among the working poor. The many hours wasted in service providers' waiting rooms (which unaccountably continue to function on a regular 9-5PM schedule) make it almost prohibitively expensive for immigrants to access free or low-cost services because of time taken off from work.

Cultural competence implies improved sensitivity to diversity and a commitment to hiring staff who can genuinely relate and communicate with their customer-clients and to providing in-service training to raise the awareness of staff who deal on a daily basis with cultural and linguistic barriers. Spanish-language skills are not enough; for example, in

farmworker areas of California, to guarantee effective service to a rapidly-growing population of indigenous migrant farmworkers of Mixtec, Triqui, or Zapotec origin who find that even Hispanic California-born health care and social service staff are not always easy to communicate with or responsive to their concerns.

Unfortunately, even where there have been opportunities for "clean sheet" program designs, as in the case of California Children and Families programs funded by Proposition 10, county commissions in regions such as the Central Valley have done remarkably little by way of empirical needs assessment, strategic planning, or program planning guidelines to develop innovative targeted approaches to supporting immigrant families with young children. Mobile vans, "daytime workshops", and still more "outreach" are not cost-effective ways to have a high impact on California immigrant families with young children. Here too, more forceful state leadership is needed.

Conclusions

Across a wide range of areas where state government is already involved, there are opportunities for the state to show leadership in developing innovative responses to the statewide challenges faced by immigrants. Those responses must both be effective and cost-effective. One particularly promising possibility is that private-public sector partnerships can provide a means for "thinking outside the box" and taking whatever initiative is needed to assure the ongoing development of a productive, world-class workforce in California.

Bringing all agencies to the table in comprehensive cross-agency planning is also worthwhile—despite the costs entailed. It is critical to break down the public sector "silo mentality which gives priority to program-based planning when the rational course of action is to design programs in response to population characteristics and needs, not further tinker with flawed program designs. The experience in states such as Illinois where there has been a concerted effort to systematically respond to immigrants, in California counties such as Santa Clara and San Benito which worked in a particularly proactive way to respond to the crisis sparked by PRWORA restrictions on legal immigrants' service eligibility has been that this collaboration helps.

Developing effective social policy responses to integrating California immigrants into the mainstream of community life will, of course, entail public sector costs. But this does not mean that the only issues, or even the primary issues relate to funding and total amounts of dollars.

The first step, I would argue, is to look carefully at demographic, cultural diversity and social dynamics of life in California communities where immigrants are concentrated. Based on this needs assessment, the state could carefully assess priorities, not within a policy framework which simply seeks to extend to immigrants eligibility for existing programs but, instead, within a framework which examines opportunities to have an real impact—especially where state involvement can catalyze local efforts to confront problems which have been "shoved under the rug" for decades.

Immigrants themselves should be invited to participate actively in whatever state efforts there are to develop an immigrant-oriented social policy agenda. In this context, their contributions and counsel will, I expect, be to give top priority to initiatives that help immigrants to help themselves—a hand up, not a hand out, to give immigrants' equitable opportunities for civic participation, to help others as well as to advance themselves.

The stakes are high—not only in immediate human terms but in the long-run. Proactive social program investments in immediate, strategic but intensive efforts to fully integrate immigrants into California life are likely to pay off handsomely in the future. The cost of no action or ineffective action will be a higher level of social and ethnic conflict, as well as decreased business competitiveness in the coming 10-20 years.

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